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Thursday, December 14 - Wednesday, December 20, 2017

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Super Santas spread cheer in festive charity run

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Tammie Pickett holds her godson Frankie O'Connor with his mum Debbie in the winter wonderland grounds at Naomi House & Jacksplace

By Eva Astreinidou

A MILLIONAIRE lottery winner has given some extra sparkle to a children's hospice just in time for Christmas.

Tammie Pickett organised a delivery of Christmas lights for four-year-old godson Frankie O'Connor and everyone else at Naomi House & Jacksplace, turning the grounds into a winter wonderland last week.

The 38-year-old won the £1,000,000 top prize on a national lottery scratch-

card just before Christmas last year after she popped into a convenience store to treat her little girl to some sweets after a visit to the doctor.

Mum-of-four Tammie said: "Being able to bring the Christmas lights to Naomi House & Jacksplace and see the children's faces light up just as brightly as the garden has been absolutely wonderful.

"Seeing Frankie enjoying the lights has been an early Christmas present for me and his mum, Debbie O'Connor. They've both been through

so much since Frankie was born with Pontocerebellar hypoplasia (PCH) so being able to do something special for them and making Frankie the star of today has been wonderful.

"I'll remember this moment and will once again count my lucky stars for that lottery win."

Speaking about her win, Tammie who was living in Popley at the time, said: "When I revealed that £1million symbol I just couldn't have predicted how our lives would change."

Since the big win, Tammie and hus-

band Ian moved with their children to their own detached four-bedroom dream home in Basingstoke.

They've also enjoyed their first family holiday together in the sun.

But Tammie said: "Winning the lottery hasn't been about flash cars and glamour, it's about helping those who mean the most to us."

Several children and young people, aged from newborn to 35, and their families will be spending Christmas at the hospice.

Play and activities team leader,

Huw Bromage, said: "Christmas is such an exciting time of year and as a home away from home it's essential that we give every child and young person a chance to enjoy everything that it entails.

"Tammie's delivery of lights is truly fantastic and has enabled us to create the winter wonderland of our dreams."

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Father is Headway's volunteer of the year



A FATHER who dedicated years of his life supporting brain injury survivors, after his son was hit by a car and left for dead, has won a national award.

Sandy Johnston, 82, was named Volunteer of the Year at the Headway Annual Awards at a ceremony held at London's Dorchester Hotel on Friday.

Basingstoke resident Sandy has dedicated more than 20 years to supporting brain injuries charity Headway, after his son Daniel sustained a severe brain injury from a hit-and-run driver and underwent rehabilitation with the charity.

Sandy was presented with his award by double Olympic gold medallist James Cracknell, who is Vice President of the charity.

Peter McCabe, chief executive of Headway, said: "Sandy's dedication to Headway Basingstoke and his support of the service users is truly invaluable.

"To spend two decades selflessly volunteering for the charity is nothing short

of exceptional. No doubt the lives of numerous brain injury survivors are richer thanks to Sandy.

"His willingness to take on any job that's asked of him makes him the perfect volun-

teer and he is truly deserving of this award."

For the past two decades, Sandy has donated thousands of hours to the charity, motivating clients to engage in their rehab activities and supporting

men who have lost their network of friends.

He also takes people on trips to the garden centre and the swimming pool, activities they would not otherwise be able to enjoy.

2019 date for flood relief scheme if funds approved

By Eva Astreinidou

A £6.2million flood alleviation project in Buckskin could be completed in 2019 if there are enough funds.

The project aims to provide more protection and reduce the cost and distress if events similar to those in 2014 should happen again.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council agreed to contribute £250,000 to the scheme which could be completed by

summer 2019 if the funds are secured.

Hampshire county councillor for Basingstoke South West and chair of the flood alleviation committee Cllr Stephen Reid said: "We cannot stop this from happening in the future, but if we can take every step to reduce the impact, it is a positive one.

"By introducing the flood alleviation scheme, it would be an investment in Buckskin and reassure residents living there."

The funds will help pay for a surface water gravity pipe installed between the Ridgeway Centre area in Buckskin and the start of the existing Winterbourne ditch to the north of the Worting Road roundabout.

There would also be an enhanced flood storage area at Saunders Field with measures to control discharge to the River Loddon and reduce the risk of flooding downstream.

In October, Hampshire County Council confirmed it would con-

tribute £2m towards the project. About £3.9m is expected from government grants to help carry out the project.

It is anticipated construction work will begin next summer.

Buckskin was significantly flooded during February and March 2014 after intense rainfall which caused groundwater levels to rise and flow above ground.

More than 80 households had to be evacuated after groundwater contaminated with sewage threatened homes.

News Bites

Jewellery stolen

JEWELLERY of huge sentimental value has been stolen from a house in Basingstoke.

Police have released photos and are asking for the public's help in tracking down the items.

The rear patio doors of a house on Fairacre were smashed between 4pm on November 20 and midday on November 23.

Police urged anyone who has seen the items or been offered them for sale to contact 101 quoting reference 44170456950.

Sandwich thieves

THIEVES have broken into a sandwich shop in Basingstoke twice in the last year.

Now, police have released two images of people they would like to speak to in connection with the two burglaries in February and last month.



The CCTV images released

The latest burglary at the Lunch Box in Armstrong Road took place at around 2.30am on November 5.

Two offenders broke into the shop and stole cash and stock.

The previous burglary took place between 3am and 3.15am on February 26.

Items stolen on that occasion included money, a laptop and chocolate.

Officers are linking the two burglaries.

If you can help, call 101.

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Grants for community groups

By Eva Astreinidou

PROJECTS that help support isolated and deprived areas through education and music programmes have been given a grant of nearly £140,000.

As part of the package, the Anvil Trust was awarded £68,400 to continue music-based community and education programmes through workshops and projects available to schools and neighbourhoods.

Christine Bradwell, chief executive at Anvil Arts, said: "As well as going towards the costs of The Anvil and The Haymarket, this investment helps

support our year-round programme of work in the community and schools. Whether it is sending musicians into rural schools or working with people with dementia, their families and carers, this investment makes it easier for us to continue to provide important services in Hampshire."

Proteus Theatre Company was awarded £38,315 to deliver artist-led theatre work to Hampshire communities which are rurally isolated or socially deprived.

Whitchurch Silk Milk, which hosts projects to inspire the public about textiles and the skill of weaving using

mills, was awarded £19,265 to help support its long-term financial stability and help fund its work in learning activities and events.

Buckskin and Worting community association will use its £6,920 to develop a jobs club and extra lunch club sessions for people who are in the top 10 per cent of the most deprived areas in Hampshire.

Fluid Motion Theatre Company was also recognised for its work being awarded £6,000 to continue professional touring work on a range of mental health themes by delivering education and community projects to

around 18,000 people a year.

The grant funding was signed off last week by Hampshire County Council. Councillor Andrew Gibson, the council's executive member for culture, recreation and countryside, said the funding will help cultural and community organisations continue their 'diverse and valued work' for residents of all ages.

He added: "A good number of organisations are focussing on ensuring that those at risk of social isolation are not forgotten, but integrated into positive, inclusive activities at the heart of their communities."

Super Santas spread cheer in festive run

WARNINGS of ice and freezing temperatures could not stop a group of Santas who were determined to deliver some Christmas cheer for a Basingstoke cancer charity.

More than 80 supporters pulled on their Santa suits to take part in the first festive fun run for the Pelican Cancer Foundation on Sunday.

High winds and driving rain failed to deter the super Santas, who took on a 5km or 10km course to help raise £6,500 from the event.

Proceeds will fund Pelican's clinical research into advancing precision surgery in the treatment of bowel, liver, bladder and prostate cancers.



The Mayor and Mayoress of Basingstoke and Deane, Cllr Paul Frankum and Cllr Jane Frankum, gave the official seal of approval to the event and handed out medals to all the runners.

Cllr Paul Frankum said: "It must have taken a lot of work and patience to set it all up but I can honestly say, I think it was worth it on so many levels.

"Despite the awful weather, we saw

warm smiles and a sense of achievement as each person crossed the line."

To donate or find out more about the Pelican Cancer Foundation, visit www.pelicancancer.org.

Stay safe in winter weather

THERE was disruption on bus services and roads as people across the area were told to 'take extreme care' following weather warnings and dropping temperatures.

The Met Office extended its yellow warning for ice in the area until Tuesday morning, urging people to take care, as Stagecoach South apologised for severe delays on all Basingstoke services.

On Monday afternoon, a Hampshire County Council spokesperson tweeted: "With road surface temperatures way below freezing point,

be aware that salting is less effective below -5C and may not work at all below -8C. Please take extra care."

Gritters were out on the roads dealing primarily with priority one routes before reloading for another salt run on Monday evening.

The Met Office said: "There will probably be icy stretches on untreated roads, pavements and cycle paths with some injuries possible from slips and falls.

"Some roads and railways are likely to be affected with longer and more difficult journeys."

Seasonal buses

STAGECOACH South has released details of its services over the festive period.

There will be a normal Sunday service on Christmas Eve with the last bus through the centre running until 8.35pm and the same for New Year's Eve. There will be no services on Christmas Day, with only a Sunday service running on Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Buses with Santa at the wheel are also back, with all proceeds going to St Michael's Hospice in Basingstoke.

For more information, visit <https://tinyurl.com/ydgjkvzz>

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News Bites

Milk thieves hit twice

THIEVES stole baby milk products and returned to steal more from a village store only moments later.

Police have released CCTV images of three people they would like to speak to following the theft at the One Shop store in Hartley Wintney on November 27.



At around 3.10pm, offenders entered the store in High Street, and stole a quantity of baby milk products.

Moments later, they returned and stole more baby milk.

The total value of the theft is £205. If you can help, call 101.

Flip Out delayed

BASINGSTOKE'S newest trampoline park will not open this weekend despite an announcement last week suggesting otherwise.

The much-anticipated Flip Out Basingstoke will not open after damage to its roof from the recent extreme conditions.

General manager John Rickards said: "We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused and we will be in touch with anyone who has already booked. We are doing all we can to get Flip Out Basingstoke open as soon as possible."

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Pillar of the council will be much missed

By Eva Astreinidou

TRIBUTES are being paid to a long-serving councillor and former mayor who will 'be sorely missed'.

Councillor Rita Burgess passed away on December 3, two weeks before her 75th birthday.

The Mayor and Leader of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council led the tributes to Mrs Burgess, who spent 30 years of her life serving her community.

She leaves three children and four grandchildren.

Mayor of Basingstoke and Deane Cllr Paul Frankum said: "Having served with Cllr Rita Burgess for 14 years on the licensing committee I found she always had a warm and supportive word of encouragement, and was quite often seen handing out sweets at full council meetings. She will be sadly missed."

Born in Essex, Cllr Burgess moved to Basingstoke in 1969 with her family – her son Steven and her twin daughters Susan and Hazel.

Having first been elected to



Cllr Rita Burgess served as Mayor in 2002/03

the borough council in 1984, she served as a councillor for Winklebury for 12 years.

She returned to the council in 1999 representing Kempshott ward, and served as chairman of the council's licensing committee for many years.

As Mayor of Basingstoke and Deane from 2002 to 2003, she enjoyed her time as first citizen of

the borough, with daughter Hazel serving as her consort.

Cllr Burgess was also a councillor for Hampshire County Council.

Borough council leader Clive Sanders said: "Rita was somebody who really embodied the idea of public service – 30 years of being a borough councillor, 18 years as a county councillor and holding the office of mayor for a year is a track record that few will emulate. On the surface a quiet and gentle person who was scrupulously fair, that appearance masked a piercing intellect and an unwillingness to suffer fools gladly that made her an outstanding chair of licensing. A pillar of the council for so many years, she will be sorely missed by all who knew her."

With a career in accountancy, Cllr Burgess worked on environmental projects at AWE in Aldermaston.

A member of the high IQ society MENSA, Cllr Burgess was also keen on adventurous sports.

The funeral service will take place at Basingstoke Crematorium tomorrow [December 15] at 3.30pm.

Protesters message on the climate

A GROUP of climate change campaigners held a protest in London to call for a major reformation of the economy to help the 'health of the planet'.

Ruth Jarman, from Hartley Wintney, joined a group of campaigners in performing street theatre and holding a vigil outside the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy last week.

She and other members of Christian Climate Action, dressed as Pope Francis and Martin Luther, made their mark by spraying Stop Climate Chaos in red paint on the department's plaque.

Ms Jarman said the group welcome the government's Clean Growth Strategy, but said it isn't enough.

She said: "The short-term health of the economy is being prioritised above the health of the planet. We have all the information, science and technology we need to lead the world away from the cliff-edge of climate instability towards a sustainable future."

The group used the protest as its way of marking the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the second anniversary of the Paris climate agreement.

The police were called, but the department decided not to press charges.



Ruth Jarman, centre, 'Pope Francis', 'Martin Luther' and other campaigners call for a radical reformation of the economy outside the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy where they spray painted a slogan



Warning over sharing of explicit video

POLICE are warning the public about an explicit video involving a child that was shared using social media.

Hampshire police officers are urging members of the public to delete the content should they receive it, adding that if they show

or forward the explicit video to someone else they could be committing a criminal offence.

The people in the video have been identified and specialist police officers are supporting them to ensure their safety.

If you have any knowledge

related to who shared this video, call 101.

Children who have been affected by this video are encouraged to speak to their parents, teachers or a trusted adult or can contact ChildLine on 0800 1111 for further support.

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Dispersal order in town centre

By Eva Astreinidou

MEASURES to tackle anti-social behaviour were put in place in Basingstoke over the weekend.

Hampshire police imposed a dispersal order following several reports from people in the Top of the Town area.

The clampdown gave officers the power to disperse people involved in anti-social behaviour and take any

people under 16 to their home address before carrying out follow-up work with parents.

The order also gave officers the power to seize bicycles or anything else used in the commission of anti-social behaviour.

Sergeant Trevor Taylor, from Basingstoke's Neighbourhood Policing Team, said: "The aim of this order is to improve the quality of life for the

whole community, including residents and retailers.

"We know that anti-social behaviour has a negative impact on those visiting the town centre area and the businesses that operate there."

"Anyone who witnesses such behaviour should report it to us – don't leave it to someone else to do it for you."

The order ran from 3pm on Friday to 2pm on Sunday, and included Mar-

ket Place and the Top of The Town, Festival Place, The Malls, Basingstoke railway station and Glebe Gardens.

To report anti-social behaviour, call 101.

Parents or guardians who want support in dealing with their child's behaviour can call the Community Safety Team at Safer North Hampshire on 01256 845245.

Students drawn to bench designs

YOUNG creative minds pitched their ideas for designs that could literally be sat on by thousands.

All aged under 16, the youngsters presented ideas for public seating on the Manydown development to local councillors.

Ideas including a poppy seat, a sculpture of a sitting farmer and a woodland bench will now be considered by members of the Manydown overview committee at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

The students' work was created as part of a summer workshop to engage young people in creating a lasting legacy for the new communities at Manydown, which will see up to 3,520 new homes in the area.

The cabinet member responsible for Manydown Cllr John Izett said: "The public seating designs from these young people show real creativity and great understanding of the Manydown vision and the history of



Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's cabinet member for Manydown Cllr John Izett meets the young people presenting their public seating designs for the new development, from left, Tom Ayre (poppy seat), Helen Zdyb (woodland style bench) and Ben Wall (sculpture of a farmer sitting on a large bench)

the area.

"Manydown aims to be one of the best designed new housing developments in Britain. It is important to get the ideas of those who may be living

and making their homes at Manydown in future."

Hampshire County Council leader Cllr Roy Perry said: "This project underlines how much we value the

creative input of Hampshire's young people in the Manydown project. We look forward to reviewing the seating designs and seeing where they can best be placed."

New hospital unit to help over winter

A NEW hospital unit is set to ease the pressure on services that experience high volumes of sick people over the winter months.

The 28-bed Overton Unit has opened at Basingstoke and North Hampshire hospital.

Situated to the rear of the Sherborne building, the unit will cater for patients who are soon returning home and those who are nearing the end of their lives.

Twenty-four of its beds will provide 'step down care' for those who no longer require the high level of acute care provided in hospital. The other four beds will be in individual side rooms set aside for patients who require specialist palliative care.

Alex Whitfield, chief executive of Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital, said: "Opening this new unit will enable us to release space on the acute care wards for very sick patients when they need to be admitted to hospital.

"We will continue to experience increased pressure on our hospital services due to high numbers of very sick people needing to be admitted over the course of the winter period. Opening the Overton Unit is one of the measures we have put in place to help us manage the challenges we expect to face. I'd like to say a big thank you and well done to all the staff who have worked hard to ensure the unit is open in time for this busy period."

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The police officers with some of the locals they helped in the British Virgin Islands after Hurricane Irma

Officers praised for helping after Irma

By Eva Astreinidou

POLICE officers who dropped everything to help those whose lives were devastated by Hurricane Irma were honoured at a special ceremony.

Five officers from Hampshire, along with five from Thames Valley Police, were deployed to the British Virgin Islands for three weeks when disaster struck in September.

With no running water or mains electricity, no roof on their accommodation and dangerous criminals on the run after the prison was severely damaged, the team showed 'great determination and bravery'.

Hampshire's Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney said: "These officers have dealt with some of the most challenging situations that any officer can face and they have shown nothing but great professionalism and compassion."

"I am so proud of them all and residents living in Hampshire and the Thames Valley should take great comfort in knowing that such dedicated officers are working hard every day to make our communities safer."

During their deployment the



The officers receive their awards from Chief Constables Francis Habgood, far left and Olivia Pinkney, far right

team of 10 helped to secure the prisoners, assisted the military with establishing water and electricity supplies and cleared dangerous debris from neighbourhoods.

The team worked at least 16 hours a day most days, all under 40 degree heat while wearing their uniforms designed for British weather.

Food was also in short supply and the team relied on basic rations to get them through.

The group even refused to leave when a second category five hurricane hit the island, insisting that

they wanted to be there for those who needed them most.

Thames Valley Police Chief Constable Francis Habgood added: "These officers provided security, support and compassion in really difficult circumstances."

"I know that the islanders were incredibly grateful for their presence and the officers were pleased to have been there to help them. I am very proud of them."

The officers honoured from Hampshire were Insp Alex Reading, PC Stuart Woods, PC Terry Cooke, PC David Tester and PC Martin Daniels.

Roadworks on hold for Christmas

WORK on the A33 has been temporarily suspended to make way for Christmas shoppers.

Hampshire County Council's highway works to improve capacity and reduce congestion on the road in Basingstoke will be scaled back to ease traffic disruption for the busy Christmas shopping period.

The reduced site work between Crockford and Ringway roundabout started on Friday and will continue until January 4.

However, narrowed lanes with

cones and barriers will remain in place, as some work will continue next to the road until December 22.

The county council's executive member for environment and transport, Councillor Rob Humby, said: "With the busy festive season approaching, the A33 works will be significantly reduced in the run up to Christmas, to minimise traffic delays for Christmas shoppers visiting Basingstoke."

"I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a merry

Christmas, and thank them for their continuing patience while these important improvement works are being carried out."

Once complete, the finished scheme will include widened existing approach roads, wider roundabouts, new traffic lights installed on the roundabout to allow people to enter the roundabouts more easily, existing pedestrian and cycle facilities and connections upgraded as well as improved drainage.

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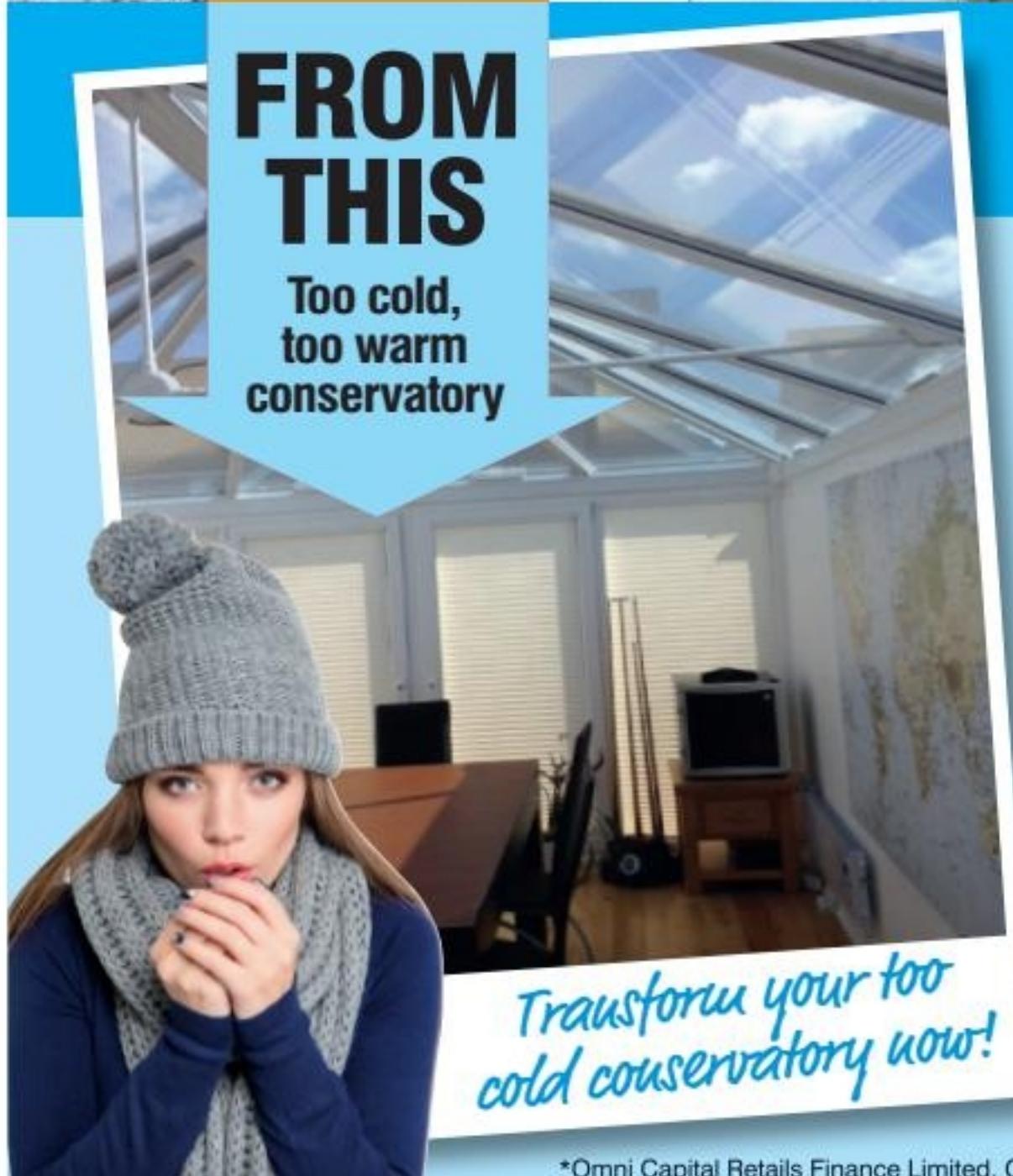


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Lilly's boost for town with UK headquarters

By Eva Astreinidou

ONE of Basingstoke's most important employers has given the town a 'massive vote of confidence'.

A deal was approved last week that will see pharmaceutical firm Eli Lilly & Co set up its UK headquarters in Basing View.

The company will operate from a new purpose-designed Grade A office building as part of the ongoing multi-million pound council-led regeneration of the central business district.

Cabinet member for property and development at Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council Cllr John Izett said after the meeting: "We are delighted that Lilly is not only remaining in Basingstoke but will be moving its headquarters into Basing View – it's a massive vote of confidence in Basingstoke and what we have to offer to international companies as a great location."

The new 45,000 sq ft office building, a result of the council's partnership with national developer Muse Developments, will be owned by the borough council once completed, bringing in additional rent to help

fund council services.

Cllr Izett added: "The proposed transaction [will enable] the council to generate the higher returns it needs to support services for our residents."

Under the proposed deal, Lilly's out-of-town Priestley Road Campus, which no longer meets the needs of the international pharmaceutical company, would be freed up for brownfield regeneration.

The council plans to sell the site to Lilly for redevelopment once the company has moved into its new offices in Basing View in approximately two years' time.

Rebecca Morison, vice-president and general manager at Lilly UK and Northern Europe, said: "I'm delighted that plans for Lilly's move to a modern, purpose-built office at Basing View have been approved by the council.

"Lilly has a long-term commitment to the Basingstoke area, where we have been based since the 1940s."

John Robinson, development director at Muse Developments, said: "This is a very positive development for Basing View and is a testament to its ideal location."



MP's praise for forest school

BASINGSTOKE'S MP toured facilities in the town to lend her support and learn more about what they do.

Earlier this month, Maria Miller visited a school which helps children who feel excluded, as well as a drop-in centre supporting new mothers.

First up was a visit to Marnel Infant's forest school, which provides a class to support a small group of pupils who would otherwise be at risk of exclusion. Children learn outdoors and can enjoy facilities including a mud kitchen.

Mrs Miller said: "The forest school is a wonderful concept and it was striking to see how engaged the children were in their activities. The children were learning number sequences in an environment which

could be adapted to their learning styles. Early intervention is key if we are to build children's self-esteem and their ability to learn and in this way exclusion can be prevented."

The MP then made a stop at the breastfeeding support drop-in centre in Brookvale, which is staffed by counsellors and volunteers who offer advice and support to new mothers.

She said: "The centre is an excellent source of support. The mothers I have spoken to today have all highlighted the need for new mothers to be supported through what can be a very difficult period of adjustment.

"It is very helpful for them to know they can be supported by both their peers and a qualified counsellor."

News Bites

Co-op helps causes

A WHITCHURCH store has raised nearly £5,000 for three local causes.

With a percentage of all Co-op purchases by store members going to a selected charity, staff from the local Co-op were able to hand over generous cheques.

Of the total amount, £1,690 went to Girlguiding, £1,515 to the Overton Playgroup and £1,737 for Testbourne School's Parent, Teacher, and Friends Association (PTFA).

The Girlguiding group will be using the cash to fund residential trips away while The Overton Playgroup will be buying a new climbing frame.

The PTFA will be using its share for new seating for the school's theatre.

Store customers who live within 15 miles of the shop are eligible to become members to help select the causes.

Pipeline work

MOTORISTS in Basingstoke are being asked to plan ahead this week as the final phase of a £182,000 pipeline project is being completed.

Traffic lights will remain in place along Aldermaston Road (A340) at the junction with Bramley Road until end of play tomorrow, after five days of work.

South East Water entered the final phase of the project which will result in 1,110 metres of a new water main being laid along Bramley Road, Little London.

For regular updates visit www.southeastwater.co.uk/bramleyroad.

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Helping the community smile

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Patient testimonial

I have recently had both my dentures replaced by Dentalia and I would like to thank everyone for making what might have been very traumatic for me, a truly trouble free experience.

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That was about 6 months ago and I have never returned or contacted Dentalia since.

I have never needed to, in fact the only reason I did once feel I should contact them was to apologise for not contacting them at all since my final fitting.

I am now writing to thank Dentalia and in particular David for all the excellent work they did for me and the fantastic customer service throughout, well done.

Mr P

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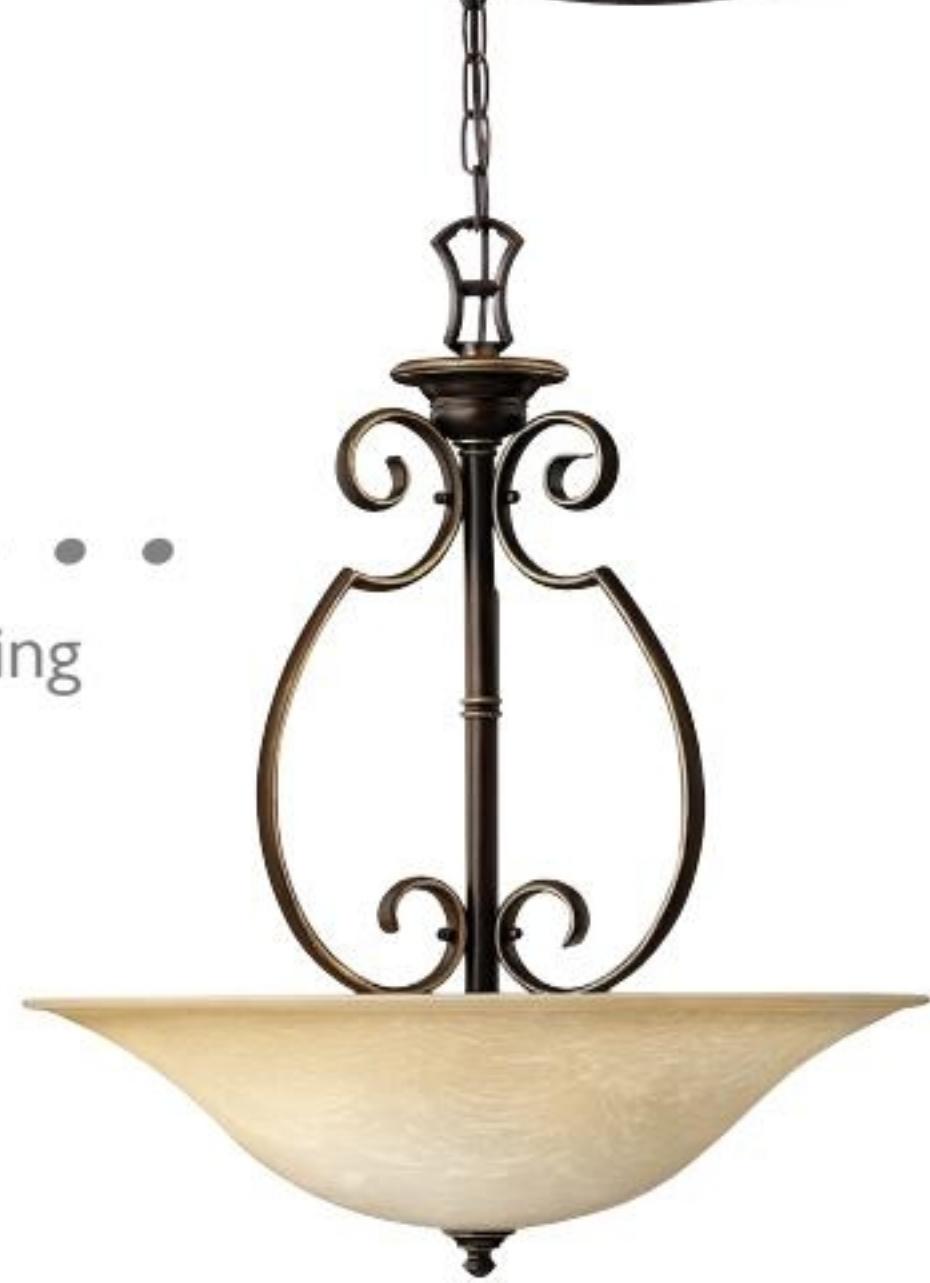
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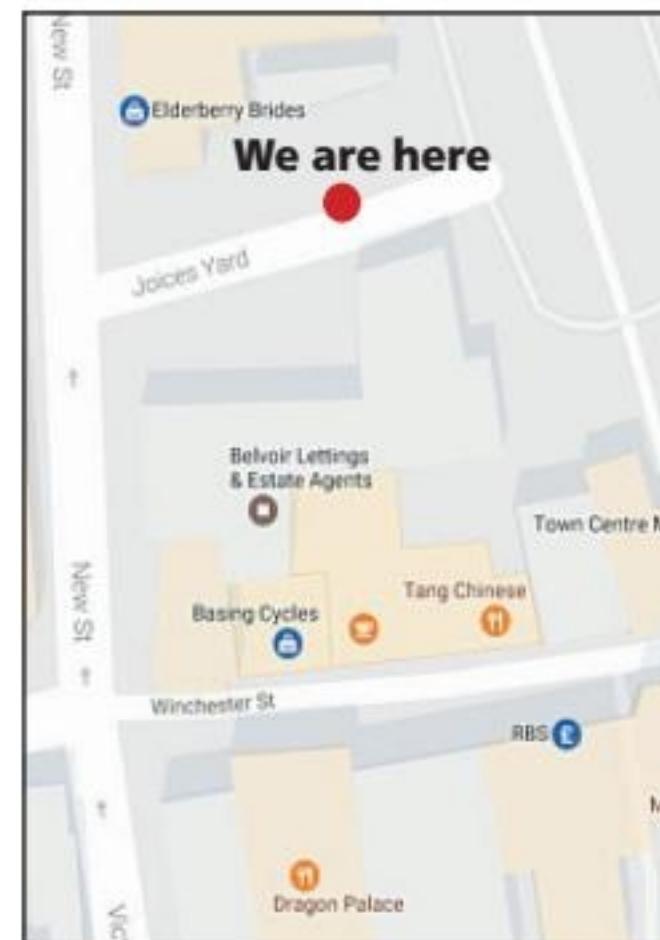
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ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE



You'll be Hook-ed!

It's panto time and The Anvil's festive fun starts tonight as it brings Peter Pan to the stage until January 7. See inside for more

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ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE



Take a trip to Neverland

By Josh Cox

PANTOMIMES are as much part of Christmas as turkey and tinsel and one of the best starts today at The Anvil.

Peter Pan, based on the much-loved children's story by J M Barrie, features all the usual heroes and villains with cheers and boos aplenty.

Ahead of the show we've been speaking to Andrew Agnew who will be playing Smee and has directed the show.

Andrew has a background as a children's entertainer and is well-known for playing PC Plum in the popular children's show Balamory, as well as directing several CBBC shows.

Does he prefer acting or directing? "They are both very different and I wouldn't be able to choose."

"There's a lot of preparation that goes into being a director, you have to be very creative too; when it comes to acting, it's a lot closer to the performance and I love how the audience reacts to you."

Andrew admitted this was the fourth Peter Pan he has directed and that he has directed a Christmas show every year for the past 12 years.

So what's the attraction of them?



Andrew said: "It's very different from TV, you develop a relationship with the audience and get direct feedback. They [the audience] may not realise it, but they have lines, and your acting may change as every audience and theatre is different."

Andrew is looking forward to sharing



Peter Pan with the audience at The Anvil. He said: "The story for Peter Pan is very important. It's traditional.

"We keep to the book but throw in pop songs and new music as well as lots of dancing, comedy and of course flying.

"It's also great for both boys and

girls with protagonists Peter Pan, Tinker Bell and Wendy."

Ticket prices for Peter Pan which runs until January 7 vary depending on performance.

For more information or to book tickets, call the Anvil Arts box office on 01256 844244 or visit anvilarts.org.uk.

Look who's coming?

DANCE: Basingstoke Tappers and Jazz Dance Company will be performing their new seasonal show Santa Claus is Coming to Town on Sunday at 6pm at The Haymarket.

Expect to see exciting choreography from 42nd Street, Beauty and the Beast, Trolls and Half a Sixpence which make this show a treat for all the family. Plus, a magical visit from Santa Claus!

Christmas classics

MUSIC: Cara Dillon will be performing a night of heart-warming Christmas songs at The Haymarket on Wednesday from 7.30pm.

The extraordinary Irish singer makes music that transcends genres and crosses barriers and, has won just about every folk award going.

Enjoy a Holly night

MUSIC: A night of Buddy Holly can be heard at The Haymarket as the tribute act Buddy Holly and The Cricketers lands on stage this Christmas.

Simon Fielder (Buddy Holly) will be celebrating his 25th year of performing as he tours the UK.

There will be two gigs on Thursday 21 and Friday 22, both at 7.30pm.

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ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE

Scrooge gets a modern twist in classic tale

By Josh Cox

PREPARE to be visited by the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future this December.

Join the creators of Brr! The Story of a Penguin Who Doesn't Like the Cold, in their fast-paced, funny and highly physical contemporary adaptation of Dickens best-loved story, A Christmas Carol.

Brought up to date for modern audiences, A Christmas Carol will delight families with plenty of laughs and high-jinks, a fabulous cast and puppets and a magical talking Christmas Tree.

It's Christmas Eve, a rich man sits alone in his gilded tower and awaits the ghosts of his past and his future.

In Scrooge's office, high in a glass tower, somewhere in the City of London, the spirits are gathering in the darkening gloom to take this selfish, greedy man on a journey to his own salvation - but will he heed

their lesson? He has just one night to change his ways or face a terrible fate.

A story of redemption and enlightenment, the show has much to say to audiences about our society, and the responsibilities we owe to others through our actions.

This performance has been dubbed "a heart-warming show recommended for the whole family" by Families Online.

The first showing is tomorrow at 6.30pm at Woodlands Hall in Headley Down. The second performance is the following night, on Saturday at 6.30pm at The Phoenix Theatre & Arts Centre in Bordon.

Full price tickets cost £7, children's tickets are £5 and there is a discount available for families.

For more information or to book tickets for either venue, visit phoenixarts.co.uk or call the box office on 01420 472664.



Russian classic

SHOW: Taking place at The Haymarket today will be Vakula and the Devil - A Russian Christmas Eve presented by Chroma Ensemble.

This is a magical retelling of Nikolai Gogol's story Christmas Eve, interwoven with a selection of Russian and Ukrainian music and song.

Tickets cost £18. The show begins at 7.30pm.

Shocking show

MUSIC: MoneyShock, a five-piece covers band will be performing at Laarsons in Basingstoke on December 23.

Their music covers many genres, including rock, pop, blues, soul and jazz from the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s with many years of experience playing together.

The free gig starts at 8pm.

Cooking up hits

MUSIC: Chris Baker will be coming to The Riverdene in Basingstoke this weekend, delivering a night of excellent vocals as he covers songs spanning the 70s, 80s and 90s with the odd modern track.

This free gig will be taking place tomorrow from 9pm till mid-night.

**Basingstoke
Observer**

Reader travel

HOTEL & TICKET PACKAGES



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HER FASHION STORY

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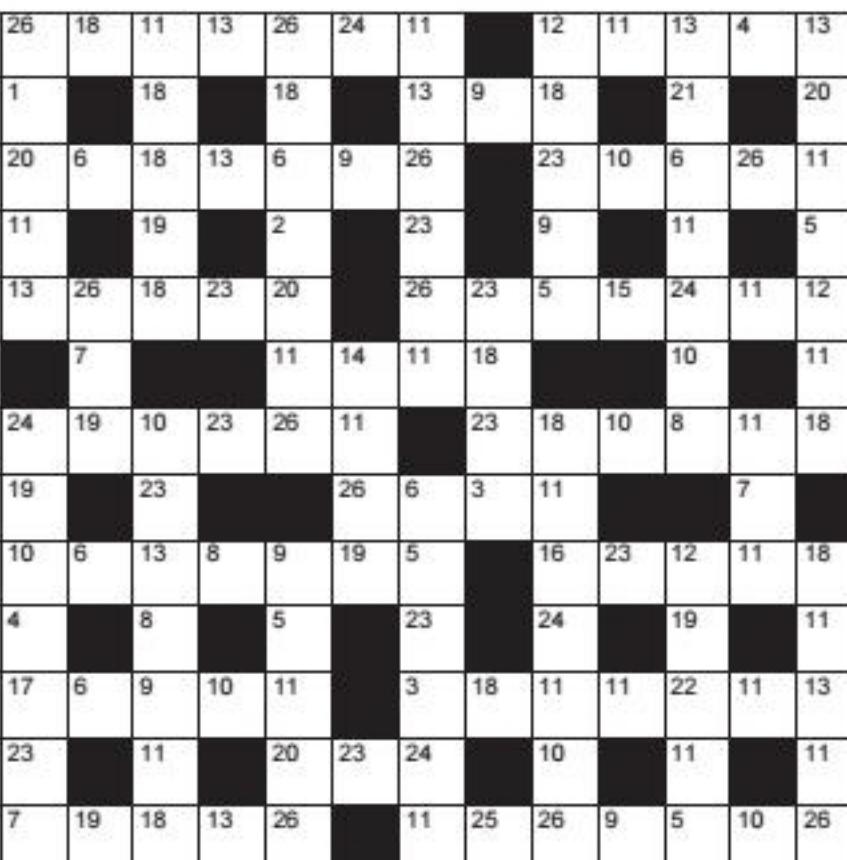
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Your weekly puzzle challenge

CROSS CODE



ABCDEF...XYZ

1	2	3	4	5	6	U	7	8	9	10	C	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	R	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	

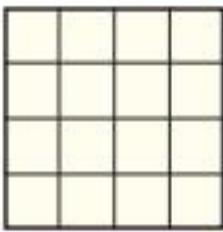
Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares.

As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

MAGIC SQUARE

FLATTENED INFILLS

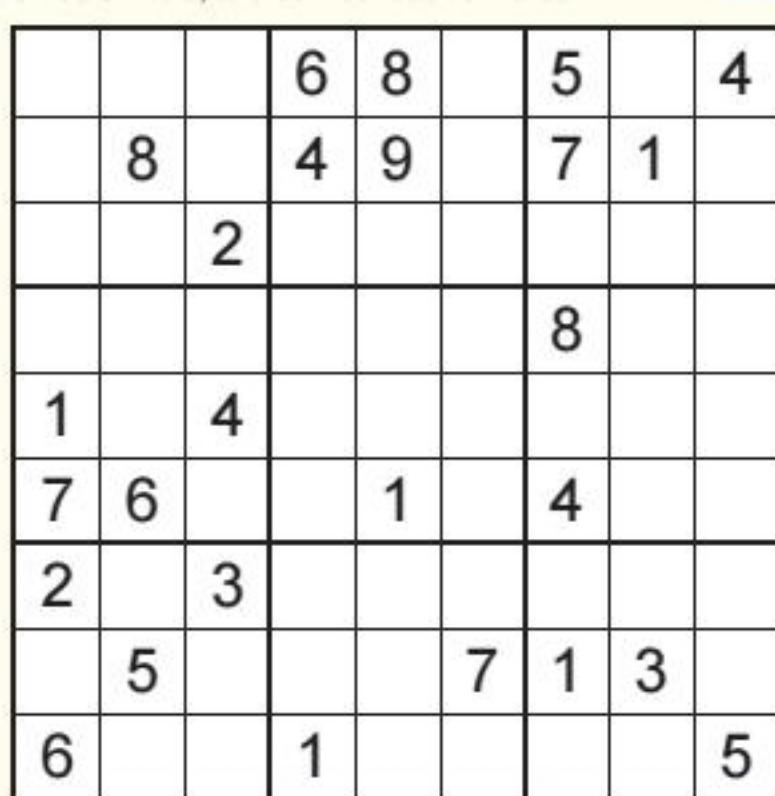
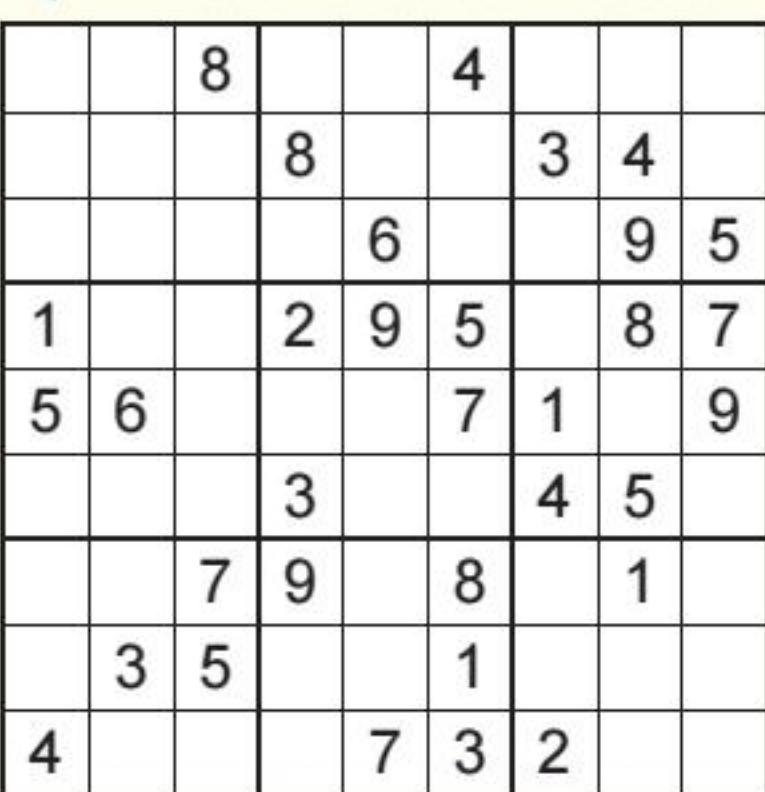
Using all 16 letters of the phrase above, form four words each of four letters which will fit in the grid to form a magic square in which the words can be read both horizontally and vertically.



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Easy

Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box.



Hard

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE: 1. Rock; 2. Shifts; 3. Please Call Me; 4. Hamilton Academic; 5. Beverley Turner; 6. Guards; 7. Campaign; 8. Battle (site of); 9. Heslings; 10. Bel; 11. Campion; 12. Zebra; 13. Snipe; 14. Down; 15. Dour; 16. Agree; 17. Fresh; 18. Clip; 19. Camp; 20. Photo; 21. Leaves; 22. Melting; 23. Metamorph; 24. Scatter; 25. Splinter; 26. Atomic cores (6); 27. Polar covering (6); 28. Operate a loom (5); 29. Thrust roughly (6); 30. Euphoric (6); 31. Delicately pretty (6); 32. Engraver (6); 33. Swindle (6); 34. Bare (4); 35. Bowl (4); 36. Bucolic (5); 37. Wash lightly (5); 38. Innate (6); 39. Edible crustaceans (6); 40. Most modern (6); 41. Expired (4); 42. On air (4); 43. American cat (6); 44. Whisky (6); 45. Arachnid (6); 46. Agent (6); 47. Lecherously (6); 48. Roll of parchment (6); 49. Amalgamation (6); 50. Pinned down (6); 51. Subtle difference (6); 52. Deprivation (4); 53. Lethal; 54. Demagogue; 55. Needy; 56. Impolite (4); 57. Successor (4); 58. Grains of rock (4); 59. Deprived (4); 60. Agent (6); 61. Lethal; 62. Demagogue; 63. Needy; 64. Impolite (4); 65. Successor (4); 66. Grains of rock (4); 67. Deprived (4); 68. Agent (6); 69. Lethal; 70. Demagogue; 71. Needy; 72. Impolite (4); 73. Successor (4); 74. Grains of rock (4); 75. Deprived (4); 76. Agent (6); 77. Lethal; 78. Demagogue; 79. Needy; 80. Impolite (4); 81. Successor (4); 82. Grains of rock (4); 83. Deprived (4); 84. Agent (6); 85. Lethal; 86. Demagogue; 87. Needy; 88. Impolite (4); 89. Successor (4); 90. Grains of rock (4); 91. Deprived (4); 92. Agent (6); 93. Lethal; 94. Demagogue; 95. Needy; 96. Impolite (4); 97. Successor (4); 98. Grains of rock (4); 99. Deprived (4); 100. Agent (6); 101. Lethal; 102. Demagogue; 103. Needy; 104. Impolite (4); 105. Successor (4); 106. Grains of rock (4); 107. Deprived (4); 108. Agent (6); 109. Lethal; 110. Demagogue; 111. Needy; 112. Impolite (4); 113. Successor (4); 114. Grains of rock (4); 115. Deprived (4); 116. Agent (6); 117. Lethal; 118. 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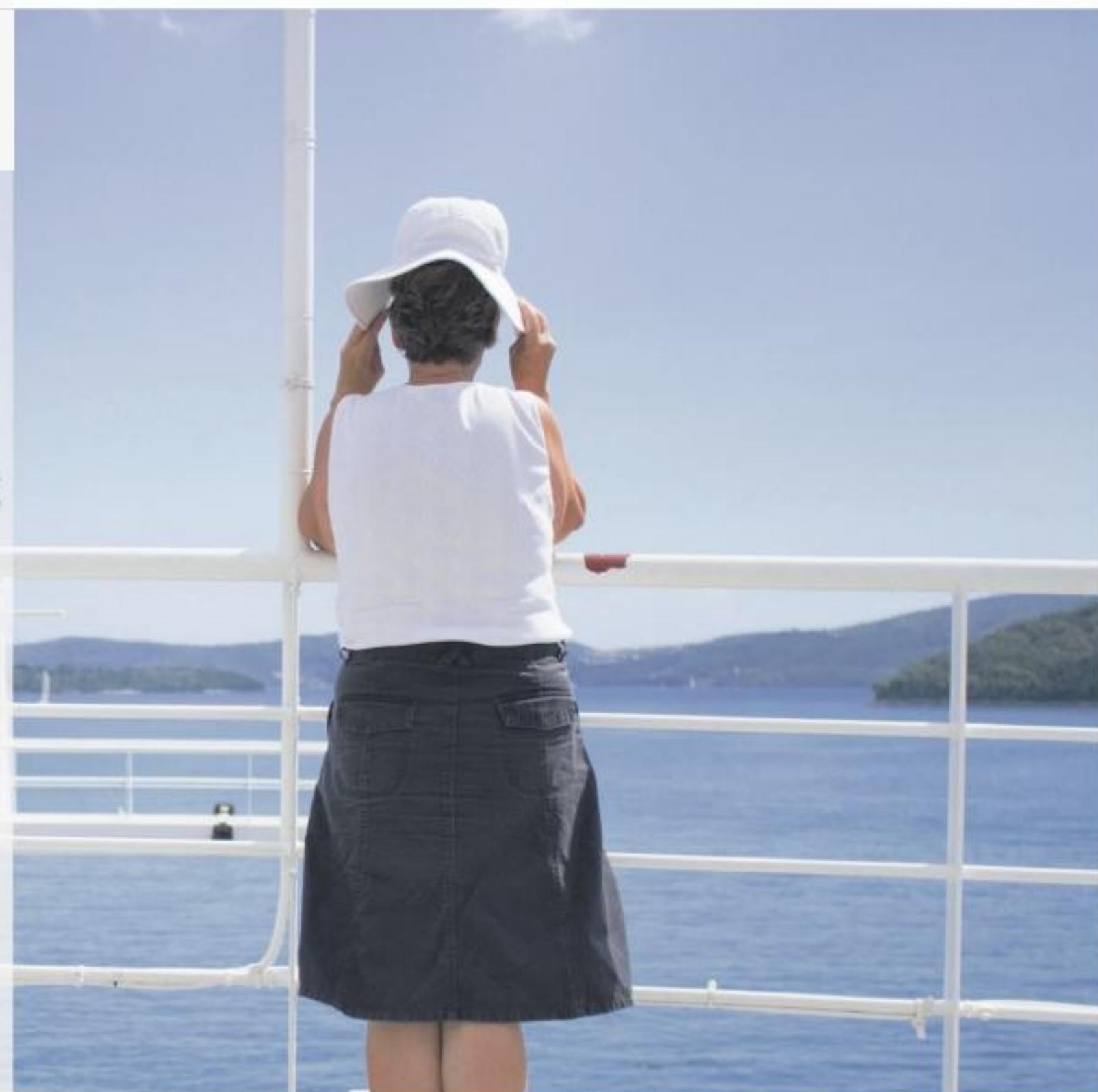
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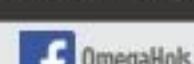
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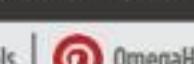
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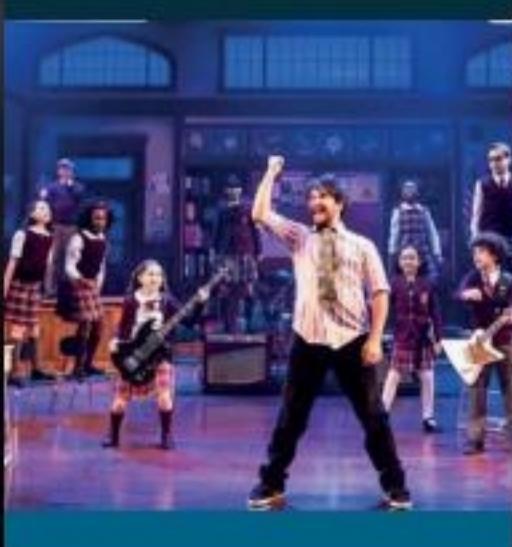
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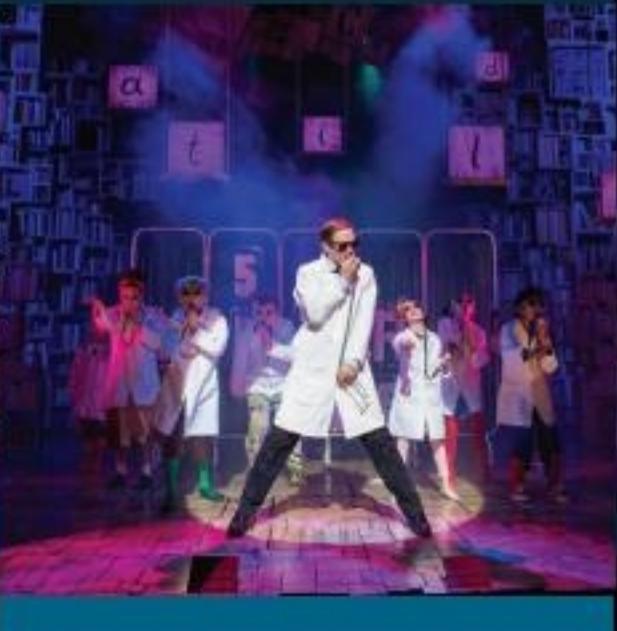
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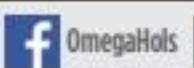


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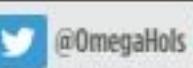


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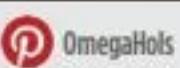
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By Tony Yates

MANY people still say that Skoda is nothing more than a cheaper version of a VW – and of course I disagree with this very much, because Skoda have proved to me over the last few years that they are more than capable of standing on their own two feet and I for one now look at Skoda as an individual company which produces fantastic cars. I mean just look at the new Octavia vRS. It's an awesome car and it deserves to be right in the spotlight because it's utterly brilliant in every way.

Power and efficiency

The 2.0-litre TSi petrol engine has a 0-62 time of 6.4 seconds and a top speed of 155mph. Fuel consumption is also good, giving a combined figure of 42.8mpg. So, firstly, how well does it get a move on.

Basically, like a scalded Cat if I'm being honest. I'm not kidding here folks it's astonishingly quick. The vRS for me



The new Skoda Octavia is more than capable of standing on its own two feet.

is the total sleeper car - so, be warned, if you do decide to take it on, you will almost certainly be crossing the finish line in second place.

On the road

The 245PS engine that's fitted to the

vRS is enthusiastic and pretty much perfect. Also, into the corners, the chassis feels poised and tight, even when dealing with all the potholes and bumps on some of our worst roads. Plus when the tarmac gets twisty, the chassis firms up to give you maximum grip in and out of every corner. The

steering also feels light, direct and is perfectly balanced with plenty of feedback on what the road beneath you is doing.

Interior & technology

First off I'm so glad to see that the designers at Skoda have paid a lot of attention to the detail inside the cabin of the vRS and thankfully it now feels more refreshing and modern than the previous vRS model I tested a while ago. Also, the seats are really comfy and the controls are well set out – plus the addition of the cabin mood lighting on the door panels is a lovely touch and something that helps soothe the mind.

On the inside, there's plenty of standard equipment, which includes dual-zone air conditioning, cruise control, acoustic rear parking sensors, Amundsen touchscreen satellite navigation system, driving mode selection (eco/comfort/sport/custom), driver fatigue sensor, electro-mechanical front locking differential, driver's seat

with memory function and 19" Xtreme gloss black alloy wheels.

Plus you also get, ESC incl, EBV, MSR, ASR, EDS, HBA and DSR ESBS, TSA, MKB, XDS all as standard along with more kit than you will ever need. That's what I love about Skoda, they are not afraid to give you everything you will ever need, right there when you need it.

Space inside the Octavia is very good – easily managing to fit in a family of four. The boot space alone is also huge – and you would have no trouble at all fitting in the whole family.

Also, if you are looking to own the vRS as a business car, then go and sign on the dotted line right 'now' – before they all sell out.

To sum up

I like the Octavia vRS because it's practical, fun to drive, has bags of torque and plenty of space on the inside. Big Skoda smiles here then.

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For Sale

XMAS tree. Homebase 6' 6". used once cost £169. Bargain £40 VGC Tel: 01256 363643

TV Table. 3 tier black with silver legs. VGC Bargain £25. Oval white table and 2 chairs VGC £20 Tel: 01256 363643

MAHOGANY STND-ARD lamp with Beige shade. Height 5ft £10. Tel: 01256 422944

BLACK dinner suit. Chest 40" Waist 36" leg 33". Worn once. Excellent condition. £40 ONO Tel: 07437850940

M&S Black dinner suit. Medium chest 42" Waist 38" leg 29". Excellent condition. Worn once. £40 ONO Tel: 07437 850940

TWO BOSS Orange eau de toilette mens. Brand new. Unwanted gift £30 ideal Christmas gift. Tel: 075844 79529

MIRA Shower valve unit. Mira Gem 88 Built in valve manual mixer shower with chrome fittings. New. £20.ono. Tel 01635 580280

20 magnetic cupboard catches. £3 Tel: 01189812350

UPVC window 6'x4' as new. Double glazed £15 Tel: 01189 812350

DRAPER mitre jig in box £5 Tel: 01189 812350

KARCHER window vac as new in box. Cost £45 accept £20. Ideal Christmas present. Tel: 01189 812350

TWO winter coats. Fleece lined Size 42 £30 each. Tel: 01256 893935

BOWLS. Taylor Vector. Size 3. Includes bag and carrier. £55. Bowls shoes size 9, worn once £15 Tel: 01256 356944

SCOOTER. Red Go Go Elite Traveller. Perfect cond. As new. Carries up to 16 stone. £4.50 ono Tel: 01420 865527

PINK learning chair £10 Tel: 01256 468217

WOODEN table for cars and trains. £20 Tel: 01256 468217

FOR sale golf trolley bag plus eight clubs. £50 Tel: 01256 422944

ONE pair beige curtains. Pencil pleat, fully lined. Drop 107cm, width 264cm £40 Tel: 01256 422944

YAMAHA Keyboard Piano. 52 keys. Stand/book in box £160. AB Exercise for abs. In box £20 Tel: 07444 357378

FREE half bag of sand in a 800 kilo size bag. To be collected Tel: 01256 397153

ONE ladies and one gents bicycle. 26" wheels. £25 each. Car carrier included Tel: 01189 700646

3 tube halogen heater. 4 years old £10 Tel: 01256 850300

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SOFABED 2 seater black leather Argos 578/7603 £359. Hardly used, bargain at £180 Tel: 01235 527292

TWO leather armchairs. Free for collection. Good condition. Tel: 07878406357

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CURTAINS. Fully lined cream/gold/red. Each 65" W Ex John Lewis. Hardly used £50. Tel: 01635 32621

CURTAIN pole, stainless steel/chrome. 38 matching rings and all fittings. 7'L. Elegant piece. £20 Tel: 01635 32621

STEREO system. 100 W. 2 speakers, CD player. iPhone holder. New £70 Sony, used little. Black. Tel: 01256 541829

YAMAHA piano in box. New with stand/book. 52 keys. Only £170. Willie Barrie boots, small, new £20. Tel: 01256 541829

NEW hand made garage for wood car. Colours match dolls house. 18x5W 30L 17.5H £8 Tel: 01256 818036

BLACK sturdy walker. 4 wheels. Used twice. Suit tall person £25 Tel: 0118 9701457

NEW hand made garage for wood car.

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THREE DVDs 'Jethro' PURPLE plastic 80 DVD films VGC. over 18 years £10. child's table and pink Horror films all £50. Puzzles 50p Tel: 07939043177 plastic chair £10 Tel: 40CD music, teenage plastic chair £10 Tel: 07939043177 and juniors all for £20 Tel: 01256 541829

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For Sale

PIANO keyboard. As new with stand. Yamaha £160. Snow White's cottage. VGC with accessories all £45. Tel: 01256 541829

WANTED fantasy and **TRAVEL** cot good sci-fi boardgames. clean condition. £20. Please list game and Phone after 5pm. Tel: price. Everything considered. **TEXT ONLY** PLEASE 07460 775703

TONNEAU black leather car covers. Fits convertible MK5 Ford Escort or similar, £30. Phone after 5pm. Tel: 01256 427943.

ADULT games com-pendium in presentation box, 7 games - cribbage, backgammon, chess etc. Used twice, £40. Phone after 5pm. Tel: 01256 427943.

SATELLITE dish 80cm wide, grey colour. Ideal for Eutelsat or Hotbird channels. Brand new, £25. Tel: 01635 523115.

BLACK leather motor bike jacket. VGC £20 Tel: 01189 667940

WANTED Star Wars lego minifigures. Will buy all. **TEXT ONLY** PLEASE 07460 775703

TV Philips 32 inch flat screen, VGC complete with stand and freeview box, £20. Tel: 01256 353882.

DVD player, Blaupunkt, good working order, £15. Tel: 01635 523115.

L/H golf clubs, 18lec battery trolley, carry bag, pull trolley. Offers. Tel: 01256 353303.

LADDER rack for Vectra Mk.2. Buyer collects from Basingstoke. £25 Tel: 07732 003 045

SHOE cabinet. Wood. Depth 24cm, height 88cms, with 74cm. Good condition £20 Tel: 01256 279326

ROCKERY stone approx 1/2 ton concrete mushroom. Can deliver. Call 9:30 - 5pm. Tel: 011488 71929

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More legs needed for 'Stoke

By Owen Hughes

BASINGSTOKE Town were the "walking wounded" on Saturday as they surrendered an early lead to concede four on the road to Hereford.

The drubbing sees Terry Brown's depleted squad fall two places to 19th in the Evo-Stik South table.

The visitors made a strong start when defender Dan Bayliss poked home from a scrambled corner in the fourth minute in front of a crowd of 2,794.

But the lead lasted just ten minutes before Hereford's debutant Eliot Richards swung in a corner at the other end that was headed in by Jack Deaman.

Keyon Reffell nodded the home side in front before the win was all but assured when some skilful play from John Mills saw the forward wrong foot keeper Colm McAdden to slide the ball in for a 3-1 half time lead.

The 'Stoke's second half performance was much improved but counted for little as Hereford looked comfortable holding onto their lead.

A short back-pass allowed Mills to

round the stranded keeper and roll the ball into an empty net late on to ensure Basingstoke would leave Edgar Street without any points.

Brown said: "I commend the boys, they came out in the second half and apart from a diabolical goal we gave away, it would have been a clean sheet.

"The fourth goal was unfair on Dan Collier, but they're all running on next to empty."

"I'm in desperate need of bolstering the squad, even if it's with some free loans from somewhere. Not on ability-wise, but just on legs," adding that his squad were the "walking wounded".

Basingstoke were without a number of key players for the fixture, including captain Marcus Johnson-Schuster, while midfielder Michael Atkinson was only fit enough to come on as a sub in the second half.

The mid-week clash with Stratford Town was postponed due to a frozen pitch at The Camrose Stadium.

Basingstoke will next be in action when they take on Dunstable on Saturday at Creasey Park.



Skipper Charlie Kennedy launches a tackle on Hereford goal scorer Keyon Reffell.
Picture: Andy Walkden

Another five-star performance secures points for Row

FIVE star Hartley Wintney posted a big win over a combative Moneyfields side to climb back into the Evo-Stik South East play-offs.

The Row scored five or more goals for the seventh time this season with a 5-1 home win over the Portsmouth side.

Moneyfields started the brighter but faced an uphill battle as they were reduced to 10 men when Curtis Da Costa received a straight red card for

violent conduct on six minutes.

Hartley made their man advantage count, but they had to wait until the 32nd minute for Rowan Vine to slot home.

The hosts were dominant by this point but Moneyfields grabbed a surprise equaliser just before half time through a Steve Hutchings penalty.

However, Hartley scored four second half goals to ensure they got back to winning ways.

Jake Baxter (47 minutes) and Paul Hodges (54) put the men in orange in charge and a fourth goal from Josh Webb on 75 minutes made the points safe.

Vine completed the scoring two minutes from time with his second of the afternoon.

Joint Hartley manager Anthony Millerick said: "It was a good win against a very experienced, skilful and physical side. Our performance levels

were good and we kept the ball well."

Fellow joint first team manager Daniel Brownlie added: "We kept good possession throughout the match against a difficult team to play against."

"We are very pleased with the displays of Callum Eagle, Joe Paris and Louie Paget, who have all come in after being out for a few weeks."

Hartley's Tuesday night game at Thame United was postponed.

Rose to host British Masters next year

OLYMPIC champion Justin Rose has been announced as the tournament host for the 2018 British Masters.

The North Hampshire golfer has chosen Surrey's Walton Heath course as the venue for the tournament, which will run from October 11-14 next year.

Rose, 37, is a former British Masters champion, winning the title in 2002 when he held off Ian Poulter, who hosted the tournament on its return to the European Tour in 2015.

The British Masters had been absent from the Tour for seven years until its inclusion in the schedule three years ago.

The former US Open champion has been in fine form this season, finishing runner-up at the Masters Tournament in April before winning back-to-back events on the European tour in the autumn.

Ian Poulter, Luke Donald and Lee Westwood have each hosted the tour over the past three years.

But it will be the first time that

a main European Tour event has been held at Walton Heath since the European Open in 1991.

Rose told Sky Sports: "It's a huge honour to host the British Masters and to follow in the footsteps of three friends of mine, Ian, Luke and Lee.

"I've known for a while that I was next in line to host in 2018, so I've been watching carefully to see how the boys have done the hosting role."

Raised in Hook, Hampshire, Rose took gold in Rio in 2014 upon the sport's return to the Olympic stage.



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Sport Bites

Buffalo slip to 11th

ICE HOCKEY: Basingstoke Buffalo suffered a third consecutive defeat on Sunday losing 5-2 to the Bristol Pitbulls.

A goal in the 30th minute from Mark Austen was not enough to overturn the 3-0 deficit, with Blair Dubyk finding the net a minute before the Pitbulls completed the rout in the 55th minute.

The loss is Buffalo's seventh in their opening 12 games in the NIHL South 2, dropping them to 11th, one place below Bristol.

Buffalo host Bracknell Hornets on Sunday in their final game this year.

Four conceded again

FOOTBALL: Whitchurch United conceded four goals for the second time in consecutive away league and cup fixtures, losing 4-0 to Totton & Eling, leaving them 14th in the division.

Whitchurch have failed to win since thrashing Folland Sports 4-1 on November 11.

Tadley Calleva's away clash with Andover New Street on Saturday in the Sydenhams Football League Division One was postponed.

They could leapfrog Andover into first place when they take on league leaders Christchurch on Saturday at Barlows Park while Whitchurch host Hythe & Dibden.

Driver's sons try out

RACING: Sons of Hampshire's Hook Touring Car racer Rob Collard, Ricky and Jordan, have tested ahead of the 2018 season.

Ricky, the eldest, tried out a West Surrey Racing team Touring Car Championship at Silverstone, while Jordan has been testing for the Mini Challenge at Snetterton and a Ginetta G55 at Donington.

Jordan raced in last season's Ginetta Junior Championship but is too old to compete next season.

Still searching for win

RUGBY: Basingstoke RFC face Portsmouth on Saturday as they continue in their search for a first London 3 South West win of the season after suffering a 25-19 defeat to Warlingham.

The result leaves them firmly rooted to the foot of the table, languishing on just two points.

Tadley Tigers prepared for their upcoming visit from Chesham with a hard-fought 11-10 away win over Bletchley in the Berks Bucks & Oxon Premier.



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Inside: Basingstoke 'running on empty' | Five-star Row back into play-off places | Rose to host British Masters in Surrey next year

Bison continue charge up table after netting four more points

Coach delighted as players step up

By Owen Hughes

A SHORT-BENCHED Basingstoke Bison claimed all four points from their double weekender and remain within touching distance of NIHL South 1 leaders Peterborough Phantoms.

Bison left the capital with a 7-4 victory after braving the snow-covered roads and heading to London to face Streatham IHC on Sunday.

Goals from Tomas Karpov and Hallam Wilson put the visitors ahead against the Londoners within the first two minutes, before Aaron Connolly scored a powerplay marker in the fifth minute.

Streatham pulled two back in the first period despite Bison outshooting their hosts, with the home team scoring the only goal in the middle frame to level the score at 3-3.

Bison captain Aaron Connolly converted a powerplay to re-take the lead before Streatham levelled again shortly after. Connolly broke through to score his hat-trick goal, with Grant Rounding and Paul Petts completing the score line.

Defender Joe Baird and forwards Vanya Antonov, Josh Smith and Roman Malinik were all missing from Saturday's 6-2 Autumn Cup win over

the Phantoms.

Peterborough came to the Basingstoke Arena determined to show the form that has them topping the South 1 table, piling pressure on in the opening period.

The puck was eventually slotted in the net by captain Connolly in the middle frame before putting the Herd 2 goals clear after ringing one in off the cross bar.

Further goals from Ryan Sutton, Stuart Mogg, Rounding and another for Connolly earned Bison the win.

Head coach Doug Sheppard praised his team's hard work after two gruelling games for the short-benched Bison.

He said: "We played two big games and we all knew how short we would be going in to these games but the guys stepped up big time."

"We put in lots of hard work over the 120 minutes to get the two positive results."

"We'll hopefully welcome some guys back next weekend but I needed the guys to step up this weekend and they did and I can't ask anymore than that."

Bison will look to replicate their success in the league as they prepare for a visit from Milton Keynes Thunder on Saturday.



Stuart Mogg scores as Basingstoke Bison won both their weekend games.
Picture: grantkingphotography.com

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